



Court Connections

News from the New Mexico Judiciary

July/August 2018

A message from Chief Justice Judith K. Nakamura

As I visit courts around our state, I am impressed by the exemplary work of so many of our individual employees and the exciting changes currently underway. It is time you hear about them too!



You will find some of these stories in this first edition of *Court Connections*.

The Supreme Court has recently approved a series of *Excellence Initiatives* and innovative changes recommended by our chief judges and court executive officers. Details about the initiatives are being finalized and will be announced later. These changes will respond to the public demand for fair, timely and effective justice, and will maximize our use of technology, streamline processes and improve access to our courts.

Representatives from the Judiciary and the State Bar are also working together to explore new and more efficient and cost effective means of resolving disputes.

Finally, each of our courts is examining every aspect of its operations to find ways to responsibly and timely conduct business. You will find more information about these initiatives and our progress in future newsletters. I hope you enjoy this first edition of *Court Connections*.

From Motorcycle Cop to Supreme Court Justice *Top court's newest member traveled an interesting path*

Justice Gary L. Clingman, the newest member of the New Mexico Supreme Court, traveled a path to the law that took him through the oilfields and included time as a police motorcycle patrolman. Chief Justice Judith K. Nakamura administered the oath of office to Justice Clingman during his June 15 investiture ceremony in the Supreme Court courtroom.



Justice Gary L. Clingman takes the oath of office.

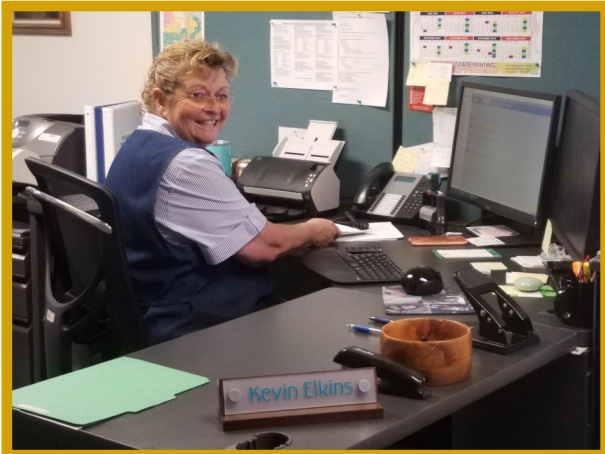
"Two things stand out since I joined the Supreme Court: First, the inclusiveness and collegiality shown to me by members of the Court and the Court's staff. Second, because the Supreme Court is the court of last resort, the overarching drive and passion to follow the law and to get it right," said Justice Clingman.

Before his appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Clingman had served on the Fifth Judicial District Court in Lea County since 1997, including as Chief Judge from 2006 to 2013. He received his law degree in 1984 from Texas Tech University School of Law and a Master of Judicial Studies from the University of Nevada Reno in 2014.

Justice Clingman worked as a private practice attorney with a Hobbs law firm from 1985 to 1997. He previously served as a law enforcement officer in Oklahoma and Texas, including as a patrolman and motorcycle officer for the Odessa Police Department. He also was an oilfield worker. Justice Clingman succeeds Justice Edward L. Chávez, who retired in March.

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Kevin Elkins, Magistrate Court Clerk of the Year for 2017.

Harding County's Kevin Elkins is Magistrate Court Clerk of the Year

Kevin Elkins, Court Manager at the Harding County Magistrate Court, was selected as the 2017 Magistrate Court Clerk of the Year. Kevin has been with the Judiciary for more than 16 years and has served as the court manager in Harding County since January 2016. Kevin assists other Magistrate Courts by entering citations and helping when other courts are short-staffed. Kevin is always developing new skills such as using List Manager, exploring reports and learning about the budget and legislative processes. In 2017, Kevin entered more than 7,000 cases in Odyssey, the Judiciary's case management system, for other Magistrate Courts while working in Harding County.

She also traveled to courts in Lovington, Raton and Tucumcari to assist with their workloads.

Kevin's greatest strength is her strong work ethic. When she is at the Magistrate Court in Roy, she is constantly tending to court business—either Harding County's or other courts.

Regional Magistrate Court Clerks of the Year also were named by a committee of clerks, magistrate judges and staff of the Magistrate Courts Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts. Those award recipients are Trinnie Martinez of Española, Region 1 Clerk of the Year; Amy Hronich of Raton, Region 3 Clerk of the Year, and Tara Flowers of Roswell, Region 4 Clerk of the Year.

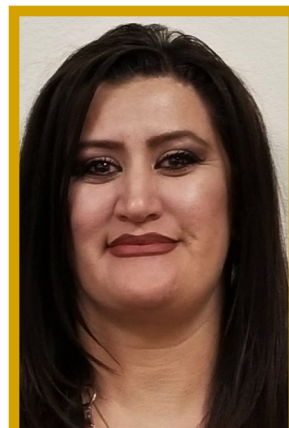
Regional Magistrate Clerks of the Year



Amy Hronich, Region 3



Tara Flowers, Region 4



Trinnie Martinez, Region 1



Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Judge Sharon D. Walton, left, accepts the Henrietta Pettijohn Award from Court of Appeals Judge Monica Zamora.

Metropolitan Court Judge Sharon D. Walton Honored by New Mexico Women's Bar

Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Judge Sharon D. Walton was recognized by the New Mexico Women's Bar Association with the prestigious Henrietta Pettijohn Award at a May 10 reception for her lifetime of work supporting women in the legal field.

Ms. Pettijohn was the first woman to be admitted to the Bar of the Supreme Court in the Territory of New Mexico.

Judge Walton was appointed to Metropolitan Court in 1999, where she serves in the Criminal Division. She has served in state and local government since 1987, including terms as an Assistant Attorney General, Deputy General Counsel for the

New Mexico Corrections Department, and Corrections Administrator. She acted as the Associate Warden for the Penitentiary of New Mexico Maximum-Security Unit and as an Assistant City Attorney representing the Albuquerque Police Department. Judge Walton also served as a Problem Solving Court Judge, presiding over the court's Domestic Violence Repeat Offender Program and as one of the Courts to School program judges.

Judge Walton received her law degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law in 1987. She continues her professional education through frequent courses at the National Judicial College. Judge Walton also teaches Evidence, Criminal Procedure and Paralegal Studies at Central New Mexico Community College.

Money raised at the New Mexico Women's Bar Association's annual reception goes towards scholarships for law students who have graduated and are studying for the bar exam.

Second District Hosts 2nd Annual Mother's Day Adoption Event

The Second Judicial District held adoption proceedings for 31 new families on May 11, marking the second year the district court has kicked off Mother's Day weekend by celebrating adoptions.

"We have always held these events on National Adoption Day in November, and we will continue to do so, but we thought we should do more to promote the idea of moving children out of foster care and into permanent homes," said Marie Ward, Presiding Judge of the Second Judicial District's Children's Division. "The Friday before Mother's Day is the perfect time to make that statement."

New Mexico Children's Youth and Families Department Secretary Monique Jacobson attended and noted that CYFD shares the Court's goal of getting more foster children into "forever homes."

The formal adoption proceedings followed the Secretary's remarks.

The event culminated in family activities such as taking photographs, making arts and crafts, having cake and refreshments—and of course sharing hugs and smiles.



New families are formed at Children's Court Adoption Events.

Problem-Solving Courts Boosting Quality of Life in New Mexico Communities

Stories about the successes of problem-solving courts continue to demonstrate positive outcomes. Drug courts in the Ninth Judicial District of Curry and Roosevelt counties were the focus of a story recently published by the *Eastern New Mexico News*. Volunteer work by defendants at local food banks and other charities is incorporated into these specialty court programs.



Brian Forde says Drug Court helps rebuild families in Curry County.

Curry County Drug Court Coordinator Brian Forde was quoted as saying that approach contributes to the program's success. "Seventy-five percent of the people who enter a drug court and graduate do not get re-arrested, and that is the national average," Forde said. "I have seen people (in the program) running businesses here in Clovis, rebuilding families."

Angie Cordova, the Roosevelt County Drug Court Coordinator, told a similar story about that program's participants. "As soon as they engage themselves into the program, they become organized; they start to change their lives; and their behavior changes," she said.

New Mexico's problem-solving courts direct defendants to treatment rather than jail, delivering benefits to taxpayers and the offenders struggling with an addiction or mental illness that can contribute to repeat criminal behavior.

Studies have found that drug courts are four times less expensive than prison and two times more effective than prison in preventing re-arrest. For drug courts statewide, the average cost per-client was \$23.95 a day in the 2017 fiscal year.

There are more than 50 problem solving courts – drug and mental health courts – statewide in district and magistrate courts and the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court.



Angie Cordova has seen lives transformed in Roosevelt County Drug Court.

SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH COURT CONNECTIONS

This newsletter was created to share the news and accomplishments of the entire New Mexico Judiciary. We need your help to make that vision a reality. You know all the great things happening in your courts. Send those stories—and don't forget the photos—to Sidney Hill, at albdxh@nmcourts.gov. The deadline for the next issue is August 6.

Judicial Employees Should See Pay Raises in Aug. 3 Paychecks

The state budget provides for higher compensation for judges, judicial workers and other state employees in the 2019 fiscal year, which starts in July.

Pay raises will vary for judicial workers, depending on a number of factors.

Your local HR representatives can help with questions about your specific situation.

To qualify for an FY19 compensation increase, court workers must have received a satisfactory job performance evaluation and completed the required probationary period.

Upcoming Events

Law-La-Palooza Free Legal Clinic

Thu. July 12, 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Location: Alamosa Community Center, Albuquerque

Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Free Legal Clinics

Fri. July 13, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Fri. Aug. 10, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Location: Metropolitan Courthouse

Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Safe Surrender Event

Sat. July 14, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sun. July 15, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Location: Metropolitan Courthouse

Ninth Judicial District Family Law Clinics

Wed. July 18, 10:00 a.m. at the Roosevelt County Courthouse; and 1:30 p.m. at the Curry County Courthouse.

Real ID Free Legal Fair

Sat. July 21, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Barelas Community Center, Albuquerque